



Friday, November 18 General Meeting • Seaman's Lodge, Pioneer Park

Cyanide, mercury and acid drainage: environmental issues in modern gold mining



The search for gold begun in 1849 shaped our history and changed our environment. November speaker Glenn Miller brings a gold mine of information to show that the impacts of mining continue to the present day.

Gold mining has changed dramatically in the last 40 years, with a shift in recent years to deep pits or to underground mines. Approximately 80% of the US gold production is in Nevada, where the thermal extraction processes involved can release mercury into the atmosphere; Nevada now ranks as one of the top ten states for atmospheric mercury release. Besides atmospheric pollution, underground mines may have substantial and negative impacts on groundwater systems, depending on the rock type and the configuration of the mine.

Our local Idaho-Maryland Mine presents challenges for groundwater contamination and control. As water tables are lowered, oxidation of rock in the subsurface can potentially contribute contaminants that can migrate away from the mine workings when the project is closed. It can also reduce groundwater resources if existing wells are in the cone of depression caused by mining.

Professor Miller, of the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences at the University of Nevada, Reno, has in recent years examined the environmental impacts of mining, including the release of mercury from precious metals mining in Nevada, and has focused on prevention and treatment of acid mine drainage. His research group has established and operates a sulfate-reducing bioreactor at the Leviathan Mine in Alpine county. He is a member of the board of Earthworks, the Center for Science in Public Participation, ELAW, and Great Basin Mine Watch.

Please join us at 6:30 for a potluck supper before the 7:30 program.

Barbara Rivenes: Chair Chat

Reaching the Sierra Summit

Some of you may have already heard the buzz about “reaching the Summit.” Well, the Sierra Summit definitely earned its buzz and yes, it was inspiring and worthwhile! 5000 people attended this first-ever Sierra Club convention and exposition. Several sessions allowed you to mingle and engage with other Club members to set a new direction

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Sierra Uplift

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<www.sierraclub.org>

<www.sierraclub.org/ca>

<www.motherlode.sierraclub.org>

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SNG is a member of the
Sierra Nevada Alliance, a
regional coalition of groups. See
<www.sierranevadaalliance.org>

Barbara Rivenes: Chair Chat —continued from page 1



for the Club. The top choice was “Building a New Energy Future.” Two-thirds of the 700 delegates chose that as their first priority with “Building Healthy Vibrant Communities” next and “Defending Federal Lands/Public Waters” a few percentage points less.

Delegates also voted on how the Club should best invest its resources to reach these goals. The results: (1) seeking new allies and building coalitions, (2) creating media visibility, and (3)

bringing people together. Finally, delegates chose the top three ways to impact environmental decision-makers. They were: (1) influence voters’ electoral decisions, (2) focus on state policy-makers, and (3) influence local decision-makers about specific places.

For inspiration to tackle the tasks above, I would urge you to visit <www.sierraclub.org> and go to **Summit Stories**. Read in particular the speeches of William McDonough, George Lakoff, Al Gore and Robert Kennedy Jr. The talk given by architect/designer, William McDonough, was a revelation to me, giving me hope in very scary times.

McDonough’s mantra is design for “cradle to cradle”—a circular flow of use—rather than “cradle to grave”—a one-way ticket to the landfill or toxic dump. Design, he believes, is the first signal of human intention. “Do we intend to give each other endocrine disruption, cancer?” he wondered. The question that fascinates him these days is “how do we love all children of all species for all time?” He added: “You’d be amazed what happens to design when that question is asked,” he said.

And then move on to George Lakoff to learn about reframing our messages, on to Al Gore to marvel at his charm, good sense and what might have been. Top it off with some rabble rousing from RFK Jr.

Visit the SNG website

Speaking of websites, I hope you will spend some time and browse our very own website, <www.motherlode.sierraclub.org/SierraNevada>. Ernie Malamud is the talented creator and editor of the site, which contains all sorts of important information and links to our Group’s issues and projects. And it’s quick to download—even on my dial-up.

Awards

At our October meeting, awards were given to deserving volunteers, organizations and longtime members. For those of you who missed the ceremony, we honored **Chetani McKinney** as an Outstanding Volunteer for assembling our newsletter so skillfully, **Peter Lehmkuhl**

Sierra Club
membership
voted top
priority to
“Building a
New Energy
Future”

Barbara Rivenes: Chair Chat —continued from page 2

for his work in the realm of Historical Preservation in saving Clair Tappaan Lodge and **Citizens Concerned About Traffic (CCAT)** as a shining example of Community Service, raising awareness of the BIG four Grass Valley annexations.

Seven 25-year members were also honored for their support of the Sierra Club's mission through the years: **Teri McConnell, Anne Waterman, Byron Taylor, Edward Cammack, Gary Brown, Kenneth and Phyllis Gaal.**

The Uplift is taking ads

An offer too good to refuse is coming your way again. The *Uplift* is still accepting business card size ads to help you reach 1400 discerning and caring Sierra Club households with your products or services—while helping us keep down escalating newsletter costs.

Ads must be scannable or already in electronic form. Please contact me at 530-478-0117 or <rivenes@infostations.com> to get started.

An invitation to join our e-mail list

We would like to ask those of you who would like to hear from us very irregularly and only for super important issues to send us your email address. There are times when snail mail is too slow and expensive. We will not share it and promise to use it sparingly.

Please send to <rivenes@infostations.com>.

Looking for a few good Management Team members

The Sierra Nevada Group election comes around every year about this time! It's here again and we are offering you all a chance to become part of the Management Team and enjoy the benefits of leadership, camaraderie, good gossip and good will. The Team (or Executive Committee) meets monthly, plans meetings and events, discusses issues of community interest and concern, agrees on strategy to address the issues and attempts to be a positive force in the community.

We need members to step up and join the Management Team! It's not an overwhelming commitment, it's not public speaking, it's not raising money. It *is* being a giving member of the community in which you live and work and to an organization that you care about. Sierra Club is a grassroots organization that still depends on its members for

guidance and support—and is there when we need expertise and clout.

Raise your hand, join the Team, contact me at 530-478-0117 or email <rivenes@infostations.com> or <gregg@olsonmft.com>. ■

Run Through the Colors a great success (we think)

It happens every year. The deadline for the *Uplift* is the week before the annual **Run Through the Colors**, but the issue comes out after the event. Consequently we have no timely results, either financial, running times or a report of the weather (13 years - no rain!). We also can't thank all the donors or volunteers specifically, because that information is incomplete at press time. We do thank you all generally. Without you it wouldn't happen.

What we can do is specifically thank our Sponsors. For the first time we have sold sponsorships for the race and the folks you see highlighted in this issue stepped up to the plate and supported the Run and the Sierra Nevada Group. Give them your thanks when you see them and give them your business.

Watch this space in the January *Uplift* for a wrap-up of the race and complete listings of donors, volunteers and our sponsors again.

*Thank you Sponsors!***Run Through the Colors 2005**

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Wild Mountain Yoga

Karen Cox

Conservation Report



Cottonwood

Remember the plan by the Tahoe National Forest to spray herbicides on 13,500 acres near Sierraville? Here is a chance to see photos and hear from an expert with a conservation point of view.

On Monday, November 21 at 7:30 pm, at the Madeline Helling Nevada County Library, Vivian Parker, California Native Plant Society Coordinator for conservation of Sierra National Forests will present an ecologist's perspective on the Cottonwood Project. The presentation entitled: The Cottonwood Burn: Managing our Forests after Wildfires is being sponsored by the California Native Plant Society and Sierra Foothills Audubon Society. Our Sierra Nevada Group is part of a lawsuit

filed to stop the proposal to apply herbicides.

Roadless

If you would like to sign a petition encouraging President Bush to protect all of our remaining roadless areas by reinstating the Roadless Area Conservation Rule of 2001 please go to <<http://www.ourforests.org/>>.

Forest Sustainability

On Saturday, November 5 from 9 am to 4 pm, the second day of the Forest Sustainability Conference will take place at the Don Baggett Theater on the Nevada Union High School campus. (The first day of the conference takes place on October 22 before you receive this issue of the Uplift). The conference is free. For more information see <www.motherlode.sierraclub.org/SierraNevada>.

Good News

The Sequoia ForestKeeper, joined by the Sierra Club and other groups won a lawsuit in 2004 which stopped the Burnt Ridge Restoration Project. Local attorney, Rachel Fazio of the John Muir Project argued the case. The Forest Service eventually withdrew the project but one of the issues contained in the

lawsuit continued to be heard. In July, a judge determined in Earth Island Institute vs Ruthenbeck that the Forest Service could no longer hide behind Categorical Exclusion to push through logging projects disguised as "healthy forest" projects. The ruling struck down the provisions that excluded Categorical Exclusions from notice, comment and appeal.

Categorical Exclusion is a tool used by the Forest Service to sidestep the usual planning process for projects when urgency or public health or safety is an issue. The ruling has nationwide application and is good news for citizens who want to participate in Forest Service decisions. ■

Mountainfilm comes to NC

View best selections from **Mountainfilm**, America's premier environmental film festival in Telluride, Colorado. This fundraising event for the Nevada City School of the Arts screens on Wednesday November 2, 2005 at 6 pm.

Location is the Nevada Theater in Nevada City. Tickets are \$12 for adults, \$6 for kids 12 and under, and can be bought at The Book Seller and at Briarpatch Market.

Films have been selected to appeal to a multigenerational audience

For information call Sue at 432-9193 at Nevada City School of the Arts.

Your Message Here
reaches 1400 interested members
530.478.0117 or <rivenes@infostations.com>

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Ernie Malamud and Olivia Díaz

Clair Tappaan Lodge: endangered species

You may not realize that the venerable Clair Tappaan Lodge (CTL) has joined the list of endangered species. The national Sierra Club threatened to sell it unless supporters of the Lodge raised \$100,000 by September 30. This goal was achieved and our August 19–21 fundraising event sponsored jointly by our own Sierra Nevada Group and the Tahoe Area Group raised \$12,000 of this amount!

The event-packed weekend began Friday night with a full moon hike and movies in the dining room. On Saturday, participants chose among several hikes including a Bird Watch Hike, a Geology Hike, a History Hike and a mountain bike ride.

We met back at the Lodge for a wine and cheese reception Saturday afternoon and a silent auction with many wonderful generously donated items. In the evening there was a choice of live music by *Mountain Fire* and sharing of adventures around the campfire. Sunday morning there were hikes to Lake Flora and Andesite Peak. We ended this wonderful weekend with an early afternoon barbecue.

The “Save the Clair Tappaan Experience” committee, a hard working group of volunteers, made the event a success. We held frequent meetings, many at the Lodge and stayed there for dinner. From Nevada City or Grass Valley we could zip up to CTL in an hour or so and enjoy it.

Why should we save it?

CTL is the Sierra Club’s flagship

lodge, part of our Sierra Club history and tradition. Built in 1934 by a hearty group of Sierra Club volunteers, CTL is a rustic retreat for hikers, skiers, and mountain climbers. It is a seasoned wood structure nestled against a mountain surrounded by towering pines, a great room with a fire roaring in a huge granite fireplace, with the fragrance of pine resin, sounds of birds singing and a small stream running. Located near Donner Summit at 7,000 feet, the Lodge is a base for year-round recreation, and offers programs that support sustainable practices and the Sierra Club’s mission to “explore, enjoy and protect the wild places of the Earth.”

The Lodge, its nearby backcountry huts, the beautiful surrounding mountains, the whole ambiance of the Lodge embody the spirit of the Sierra Club: care for the environment, love of the outdoors and outdoor recreation. People who share the same values meet and make new friends around the fireplace. A preliminary look at recent visitor statistics shows that Sierra Club members from throughout the nation are using the Lodge. Members help maintain it. It often is the first place where people are introduced to the Sierra Club. The cost is low so families can teach their children to love the outdoors.

CTL is underutilized in summer and fall even though the recreational opportunities are unlimited. A network of nearby trails offers miles of hiking and provides access to fishing streams, remote meadows and peaks, and

crystal clear lakes. The Pacific Crest Trail is only a mile away and can be reached right out the back door of the Lodge. The Donner Pass area is great for both road and mountain biking and is also widely known as a rock climbers’ mecca.

What can we do?

The fundraising goal was achieved and showed widespread support for retaining CTL as part of the Sierra Club. But the Sierra Club board of directors also is requiring the Lodge to have a solid business plan so its operations will break even. That’s where you and I can help. We need to get more local residents to use the Lodge. We believe the Sierra Nevada Group has a special opportunity and responsibility. We can encourage people to book the Lodge for conferences, meetings, and as a starting point for outings, summer as well as winter. CTL is part of our neighborhood and part of our legacy. ■



Sierra Uplift

THE SIERRA NEVADA GROUP
of the SIERRA CLUB
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Grass Valley, CA

2005/2006 Season

We are organizing a varied and interesting program for the 2005 / 2006 season — we hope you can attend!

General meetings

Friday evenings
Seaman's Lodge, Nevada City
6:30 Dinner potluck
7:30 Program

November 18

Glenn Miller
*Cyanide, Mercury and Acid Drainage:
Modern Gold Mining Environmental
Issues*

Reserve the dates!

January 20

February 17

March 17

April 21

May 19

For details see our web page
<[http://motherlode.sierraclub.org/
SierraNevada](http://motherlode.sierraclub.org/SierraNevada)>.

Regular Committee Meetings

- **Conservation & Management Committee** Meets every fourth Monday, 6:30 p.m. at the SYRCL office, 216 Main St, Nevada City.

Local Outings

- A group meets Wed and Sat mornings at 9:00 am on Sutton Way just up from the Coldwell Banker office. They decide that morning where they are going and their hikes are easy to moderate (5-7 miles). Contact Clarence Motter at 274-3697 or Laurie Lile at 273-6406 for more information.
- Another group whose hikes are longer and more strenuous (6 to 12 miles) meets on Tues and Fri at 8:45 am on Sutton Way just up from the Coldwell Banker office. They also decide that morning where they are going to hike. Contact Robin DeNegri at 274-7985.
- And there is also the **Nevada County Hiking Club**. See <www.ncws.com/akh/hike/>